

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A submersible vehicle adapted to operate within a fluid medium, comprising:

a an enclosed, substantially fluid-tight hull surrounding an interior region and having an external surface including a non-planar portion, the hull further having a channel formed at least partially within the non-planar portion, the channel being at least partially disposed below an upper surface of the fluid medium during operation of the submersible vehicle within the fluid medium;

a sliding member disposed within the channel and moveable along at least a portion of the channel; and

a mounting assembly attached to the sliding member and including an engagement member coupled to the sliding member, the engagement member being moveable between a first position wherein the sliding member is moveable within the channel and a second position wherein the sliding member is secured in a fixed position within the channel.

2. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the channel is integrally formed within the external surface of the hull.

3. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the channel comprises a longitudinal channel.

4. (Previously Amended) The vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the channel comprises an at least partially circumferential channel.

5. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the sliding member includes an engagement surface that engages a locking surface of the channel.

6. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the engagement member comprises a threaded member.

7. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1, further comprising a tow point assembly attached to the mounting assembly.

8. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1, further comprising a wing attached to the mounting assembly.

9. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1, further comprising a tail assembly attached to the mounting assembly.

10. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1, further comprising a propulsion unit attached to the mounting assembly.

11. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1, further comprising a support attached to the channel and projecting forwardly of the hull.

12. (Original) The vehicle of Claim 1, further comprising a forward payload assembly including a support attached to the channel and projecting forwardly of the hull, the forward payload assembly including an imaging device.

13. (Currently Amended) A submersible vehicle adapted to operate within a fluid medium, comprising:

a an enclosed, substantially watertight hull surrounding an interior region and having a non-planar external surface configured to form an elongated channel at least partially within the non-planar external surface, the channel being at least partially disposed below an upper surface of the fluid medium during operation of the submersible vehicle within the fluid medium;

a sliding member at least partially disposed within the channel and moveable along at least a portion of the channel, and

a mounting assembly attached to the sliding member and including an engagement member coupled to the sliding member, the engagement member being selectively engageable between a first position wherein the mounting assembly is moveable along the channel, and a second position wherein the mounting assembly is secured in a fixed position along the channel.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the hull comprises a substantially enclosed hull of a submersible vehicle.

15. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein the channel is integrally formed within the hull.

16. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein the hull extends along a longitudinal direction and the channel comprises a longitudinally-extending channel.

17. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein the non-planar external surface has a circumferential portion and the channel comprises an at least partially circumferentially-extending channel.

18. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising a tow point assembly attached to the mounting assembly.

19. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising a propulsion unit attached to the mounting assembly.

20. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising a payload assembly including a support attached to the channel and projecting forwardly of the hull, the payload assembly including an imaging device.